Food Insecurity in the Philippines: Analyzing Food Consumption Data Across Five Ultra Poor Communities in the Philippines

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Introduction
- The Diary Project (DP) is a financial diary program run in five ultra poor communities in Iloilo, Philippines.
- Participants are asked to record their daily income and consumption, and from this data, we can learn more about how their financial decisions impact their health.

Objective of the Study
To analyze the food consumption data collected during DP Phase 1 to help evaluate nutrition of participants and provide references for future ICM programs.

Methods
- Using R to clean and analyze food consumption data collected during DP Phase 1 and track key indicators/trends
- Interviewing participants to gather information to supplement findings in the data
- Assisting research team on data collection, cleaning, and analysis

Results
- Urban communities had significantly higher numbers of skipped/no food meals.
- Only rice meals are highest in the Rural Plain community.
- Lunch is the most skipped meal across the majority of the five communities.
- High number of skipped meals are from only a few households.

Discussion
- Urban communities might have larger numbers of skipped meals and single food meals because there is less gathering and gifting of food in these areas than in the rural communities.
- Lunch is often skipped because parents want to ensure enough food for the whole family for dinner.
- DP data tracks skipped meals on a household rather than individual level. Future research that records skipped meals individually is required to get a more accurate reflection of consumption behavior.

Conclusion
- Understanding how households make food decisions and cope with a lack of food can help inform other ICM programming, as well as help refine the survey questions of Diary Project for its future Phase 2.
- The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) developed by the United Nations serves as a way to connect these findings to the varied experiences of food insecurity.

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